

**Probation Committee
Judicial Conference of Indiana**

**Minutes
June 19, 2009**

The Probation Committee of the Judicial Conference of Indiana met at the Indiana Judicial Center on June 19, 2009.

1. **Members present.** The following members of the Probation Committee were present: David Chidester, Thomas Felts, Jane Woodward Miller, Robert Mrzlack, Mark Smith, and Mark Stoner, chair.
2. **Staff present.** Jane Seigel, Jenny Bauer and Bob Champion provided staff assistance.
3. **Approval of Minutes.** The April 2009 meeting minutes were approved.
4. **Legislative Discussion.** Judge Stoner lead the committee in a discussion of the probation issues that will be considered by the Commission on Courts. The first issue for discussion was consolidation of probation departments. Jane Seigel reported that the issue was discussed by juvenile court judges at the Annual Meeting of Juvenile Court judges. She said the judges were fairly adamant that the issues in juvenile court are distinct enough to justify keeping juvenile departments separate and would advocate for any legislation to allow for a maximum of one adult department and one juvenile department in a county. Judge Smith asked if a consolidated department could still have a separate division for juvenile probation. Judge Stoner asked if it will be more difficult to consolidate in a smaller county. The Committee discussed city and town court probation departments and how they might fit into the equation with consolidation of departments. The consensus was that city and town court probation departments do not easily fit into the equation because their funding is separate, most of the probation officers work part-time, and the departments are in different locations throughout the counties. Judge Felts said that A&D programs and Drug Courts staffed by probation officers also feel like they should be separate from probation departments. Judge Stoner asked about the motivating factor behind the legislation that would have mandated consolidation. Ms. Seigel said that the legislation was introduced by Sen. Boots and that it was an efficiency/cost savings concept. After discussion, the Committee decided that its official position on the issue of consolidation is to endorse the consolidation of adult probation departments and to delay the consolidation of juvenile departments to allow for research into the feasibility of merging juvenile departments with adult departments. Ms. Seigel suggested studying whether there is a cost-savings in consolidating probation departments. The second issue for discussion was funding of probation. Judge Stoner stated that the Judicial Conference Board of Directors wants the state to assume funding of courts and asked about the political implications of the salary schedule. Ms. Seigel suggested finding reports and statistics that show the effectiveness of the schedule.
5. **Intrastate Probation Transfers.** Judge Stoner reported that he and Judge Smith did a question and answer session on intrastate probation transfer procedures at the Probation Officers Annual Meeting in May. The session was well-attended and the probation officers asked several good questions. Judge Stoner said that many of the probation

officers asked for more forms for case closure, progress reports and notice of supervision across county line. The Committee discussed the idea of creating more forms and decided that more forms are not necessary. Judge Stoner also led the committee in a discussion of the questions asked at the Q&A session.

6. **PERF.** The committee discussed a request from Jennings County probation officer Travis Shepherd regarding the Minimum Salary Schedule for Probation Officers. Judge Stoner informed the committee that Mr. Shepherd would like the committee to change the salary schedule to make county participation in PERF mandatory for probation officers. Jennings County has not opted to provide PERF coverage for any county employees. The committee discussed the issue and decided to keep the policy of not including PERF or other retirement benefits in the salary definition.
7. **Next meeting.** The next meeting is scheduled for August 12, 2009 at noon by conference call.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenny Bauer
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Indiana Judicial Center